GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3084
ANSWERED ON:15.03.2000
ANNUAL REPORT OF U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
C. SREENIVAASAN

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Indian Government has been drawn to the first Annual Report of the U.S. Department of State on International Religious Freedom in which certain critical remarks on some political and religious organisations with regard to religious intolerance has been stated therein;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

(a)&(b): In response to a US domestic legislation, i.e., the International Religious Freedom Act passed by the US Congress in 1998, the US Department of State released the first Annual Report on International Religious Freedom.The report deals with all countries of the world. In the section on India, the report, inter alia, describes some incidents of alleged attacks on Christian institutions and persons. The Report also highlights the tradition of religious tolerance and the secular character of the State in India.

(c) Government regards this report as an internal document of the US Government.Government rejects any intrusive exercise into how we conduct our affairs. The Indian Constitution guarantees religious freedom to the citizens of the country, reflecting the well-known social traditions of tolerance and respect for all religions.